

is no mention of any temple, nor any reference to a public place of worship; and it is clear that the worship was entirely domestic. The worshipper, or *Yajamana*, does not appear to have taken, of necessity, any part, personally, in the ceremony; and there is a goodly array of officiating priests,—in some instances, seven; in some, sixteen,—by whom the different ceremonial rites are performed, and by whom the *Mantras*, or prayers, or hymns, are recited. That animal victims were offered on particular occasions may be inferred from brief and obscure allusions in the hymns of the first book;^a and it is inferrible, from some passages, that human sacrifices were not unknown, although infrequent, and, sometimes, typical. But these are the exceptions; and the habitual offerings may be regarded as consisting of clarified butter and the juice of the *Soma* plant.

The *Sulcta* almost invariably combines the attributes of prayer and praise. The power, the vastness, the generosity, the goodness, and even the personal beauty, of the deity addressed are described in highly laudatory strains, and his past bounties, or exploits, are rehearsed and glorified; in requital of which

commendations,
and of the libations or oblations which he
is solicited
to accept, and in approval of the rite in
his honour,
at which his presence is invoked, 'he is
implored to
bestow blessings on the person who has
instituted the

^a IE the second *AsMaka*, we have two hymns on the
occasion of
the *Aswamedha*, a sacrifice of a horse. (See
Translation of M.
Langlois, Lecture III., Hymns T., vi.)